Frontiers for Science and Natural Resource Education

"We can live more fully, more pleasantly, more productively, if we try to understand the world of nature."

—Marston Bates
The Forest and the Sea

In a world in which the sprawl of development for human habitation is overwhelming the biologically diverse landscape, the national parks are oases for nature where wildlife and plant life can thrive and the physical features of the land, air, and waters can be appreciated. The parks are opportunities waiting for scientists to come and study. The National Park Service is striving to make the parks more accessible to scientists through the Natural Resource Challenge, and scientific research and collecting permit numbers are on the rise. As a result, species new to science are coming to light, the ranges of known species are being redrawn, and aspects of the physical landscape that are not easily accessible are now being examined. New technology is allowing researchers not only to investigate nature, but also to share information with the public in ways that were never before possible, as the stories in this chapter demonstrate.

approx. 0.8 inch (2 cm)

A relatively uncommon family of beetles, glowworms (*Phengodes* sp.) are closely related to fireflies. Adult females are wingless, luminescent, and look like larvae. This specimen, a male, was collected in Great Smoky Mountains National Park as part of the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory and has been helpful in understanding the distribution of this insect group.